

# **Commonwealth Office of Technology**

## **Monthly Cyber Security Tips**

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### **Cyber Ethics**

**From the Office of COT's Chief Information Security Officer**

#### **What is Cyber Ethics?**

Cyber ethics refers to the code of responsible behavior on the Internet. Just as we are taught to act responsibly in everyday life, with lessons such as "Don't take what doesn't belong to you," and "Do not harm others," -- we must act responsibly in the cyber world as well.

#### **What are Responsible Behaviors on the Internet?**

Responsible behavior on the Internet in many ways aligns with acceptable behavior in everyday life, but the consequences can be significantly different. For example, verbal gossiping is generally limited to the immediate audience (those within earshot) and may well be forgotten the next day. However, gossiping on the Internet can reach a far wider audience. The "words" are not forgotten the next day, but may live on the Internet for days, months or years and cause tremendous harm.

Some people try to hide behind a false sense of anonymity on the Internet, believing that it does not matter if they behave badly online because no one knows who they are or how to identify them. That is not always true. Computers, browsers, and Internet service providers may keep logs of their activities which can be used to identify illegal or inappropriate behavior.

The basic rule is do not do something in cyber space that you would consider wrong or illegal in everyday life.

When determining responsible behaviors, consider the following:

- Do not use rude or offensive language.
- Don't be a bully on the Internet. Do not call people names, lie about them, send embarrassing pictures of them, or do anything else to try to hurt them.
- Do not copy information from the Internet and claim it as yours. That is called plagiarism.
- Adhere to copyright restrictions when downloading material including software, games, movies, or music from the Internet.
- Do not break into someone else's computer.
- Do not use someone else's password.
- Do not attempt to infect or in any way try to make someone else's computer unusable.

We were taught the rules of "right and wrong" growing up. We just need to apply the same rules to cyber space!

**For more information on Cyber Ethics visit:**

- **U.S Department of Justice:** [www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/cyberethics.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/cyberethics.htm)
- **MS-ISAC:** [www.msisac.org/awareness/news/2007-01.cfm](http://www.msisac.org/awareness/news/2007-01.cfm)
- **Symantec:** [www.symantec.com/norton/library/familyresource/article.jsp?aid=pr\\_cyberethics](http://www.symantec.com/norton/library/familyresource/article.jsp?aid=pr_cyberethics)
- **Cyber-Ethics Champions Code:** [www.playitcybersafe.com/resources/EthicsCode.pdf](http://www.playitcybersafe.com/resources/EthicsCode.pdf)
- **StaySafeOnLine:** [www.staysafeonline.info/content/cyber-ethics-materials](http://www.staysafeonline.info/content/cyber-ethics-materials)

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